

# MAY JESUS CHRIST BE PRAISED

MARCH 26, 2017

## SPIRITUAL PONDERINGS

### Seven Lasts Words of Christ Part IV

As we continue our Lenten journey and reflecting upon the Cross let us prepare ourselves to go deeper by reflecting on this quote from St. Teresa of Avila: "Reflect carefully on this, for it is so important that I can hardly lay too much stress on it. Fix your eyes on the Crucified and nothing else will be of much importance to you," and now this quote from theologian Hans Urs von

Balthasar:  
"It is to the Cross that the Christian is challenged to follow

his Master: no path of redemption can make a detour around it."

#### 7. "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." (Luke 23:46)

In their book: *The Spirituality of Imperfection: Storytelling and the Search of Meaning*, Ernest Kurtz and Katherine Ketchum offer many different insights that they have gained from studying the 12 step methods. The insight I remember the most from this book is the following about surrendering your will to God: "According to the way of life that flows from this insight, it is only by ceasing to play God, by coming to terms with errors and shortcomings, and by accepting the inability to control every

aspect of their lives that alcoholics (or any human beings) can find the peace and serenity that alcohol (or other drugs, or sex, money material possessions, power or privilege) promise but never deliver."

Another way of saying it is my life is always better when I let God be God and me be me. When I trust in God and

commend my life to Him things will always turn out for the good. When I try to do things my

way then things go horrible wrong. St. Peter is a good example of this. He tried to do things his way and ended up deny Christ. Upon the resurrection, Peter allows God to direct his life even to the point where Peter allows himself to be crucified upside down.

This last saying of Christ is also a model for us. After we have seen how much God loves us, we must respond. We can hold back and not accept that love or we can commend ourselves to the Father's love. God is asking us to spend eternity with Him. Will we say yes? Or will we say no?

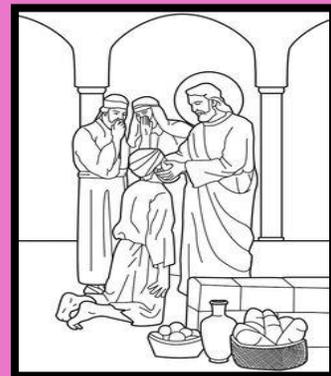
### 4th Sun. of Lent Lectionary: 31

#### Gospel JN 9:1-41

**Spiritual Reflection:** You can see that the Pharisees and Scribes have no interest in the truth because they have already made up their mind that Jesus was a "sinner." They go through the pretense of an investigation to observe appearances but they already know the outcome. Jesus though gets to know each person even those who are seemingly friendless.

#### Spiritual Questions:

1. How do you treat people who disagree with you?
2. Do other people find you difficult to be with?
3. Does Jesus example inspire you in some way?
4. Does the example of the Pharisees and Scribes inspire you in some way?
5. Why would this story be told to those wanting to become Catholic in the early Church?



A story from Ketchum and Kurtz's book reminds us how hard it is to give up and trust God.

"Clifford was leaning out against the fence, enjoying a beautiful view from the top of the Grand Canyon, when the wooden posts suddenly ripped from their cement moorings. Seconds later, Clifford was plunging down into the abyss.

Halfway to the bottom of his desperate arm-waving helped Clifford catch and clutch the branch of a scrubby tree that grew from the canyon wall. Grasping, grasping, he looked both up and down. No way could he climb that sheer cliff, even if he could swing his body toward the wall. But below yawned the chasm, unbroken by any other tree of holding place. To fall would be to die, horribly crushed on the rocks below. No one had seen him fall, and he hung there out of sight, knowing that the wind would scatter his weak voice no matter how loudly he shouted.

Desperate Clifford cried out to the heavens: "God help me!" Hearing his own trembling

voice, he wailed again "God please help me."

To Clifford's amazement, he heard an immediate answer. "All right," came the voice. The initial warmth Clifford felt turned to a chill wind gripping his body as the voice continued: "Let go."

Looking down, Clifford saw the huge boulders waiting below, and he knew again that if he let go he would surely die. Let go? He thought. "But God you don't understand!" he yelled up. "I'm too far up. I'll..."

"Let's go," the voice repeated.

Silence filled the canyon. Then, in a weak, terrified voice Clifford called out, "Is there anyone else up there?"

#### **\*Bonus reflection.**

I came across the following quote in Fulton Sheen's book **Life of Christ**: "The Last Judgment was

prefigured on Calvary: The Judge was in the center, and the two divisions of humanity on either side: the saved and the lost, the sheep and the goats. When He would come in glory to judge all

Suffering does not necessarily make men better; it can sear and burn the soul, unless men are purified by seeing its redemptive value. Unspiritualized suffering may cause men to degenerate

men, the Cross would be with Him then too, but as a badge of honor, not shame."

Fulton Sheen

continues "Two thieves crucified on either side of Him at first blasphemed and cursed. Suffering does not necessarily make men better; it can sear and burn the soul, unless men are purified by seeing its redemptive value. Unspiritualized suffering may cause men to degenerate. The thief on the left asked to be taken down. But the thief on the right, evidently moved by Our Savior's priestly prayer of intercession asked to be taken up."

## PRAYER OF THE WEEK

### Prayer For Healing

The following is a prayer for healing that I thought was appropriate because of the healing that takes place in today's Gospel.

#### **PRAYER FOR HEALING**

Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for you are my praise. I

praise you, mighty Father. You forgive all my iniquities, and you heal all my diseases. Thank you, Lord. When I am sick, you send your Word, and it heals me and delivers me from all destructions. Your Word is life to me, and it brings healing to my flesh. Thank you for

the healing power of your Word, Father. I will never let it depart from my eyes. I will keep your Word deeply implanted within my heart. Praise your name, holy Father. I love you, and I thank you for healing me and keeping me in good health. Amen.

## CATHOLIC TRIVIA

### Last Week Answers: Match the Saint with his or her quote.

- 1) C="If you are what you should be, you will set the whole world ablaze!"
- 2) B="Lord, make me an instrument of your peace; where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy."
- 3) D="Our hearts were made for You, O Lord, and they are restless until they rest in you."
- 4) A="Charity is certainly greater than any rule. Moreover, all rules must lead to charity."

A-St. Vincent de Paul B-St. Francis C-St. Catherine of Sienna D-St. Augustine

### This week's trivia.

1. After Jesus was arrested, which apostle disowned him three times?
2. Who recognized Jesus as the Messiah when he was presented at the Temple as a baby?
3. Who asked Pilate for Jesus' body after the crucifixion?
4. Paul was shipwrecked on what island?
5. What is the shortest book in the New Testament?

## CATHOLIC HUMOR

### Catholic Laughs

#### Light Bulb Fun...

1. Q: How many independent Baptists does it take to change a light bulb?  
A: Only one – any more than that and it might seem like an ecumenical activity.

2. Q: How many Presbyterians does it take to change a light bulb?  
A: It doesn't matter, as long as it's done decently and in order.

3. Q: How many Unitarians does it take to change a light bulb?  
A: Two. One to write a solemn statement which will affirm that: This light bulb is natural, a part of the universe, and evolved over many years by small steps. And we seek for each light bulb the fullest opportunity to develop itself to its full electrical potential. The second Unitarian's job is to read this statement and then write the obligatory criticism and dissent.

4. Q: How many missions magazine editors does it take to change a light bulb?  
A: Just one — they're trained to bring light to a dark world.

5. Q: How many atheists does it take to change a light bulb?  
A: None – there's no point, since atheists refuse to see the light.

## CATHOLIC QUOTES

1. "Eat my flesh,' [Jesus] says, 'and drink my blood.' The Lord supplies us with these intimate nutrients, he delivers over his flesh and pours out his blood, and nothing is lacking for the growth of his children" -St. Clement of Alexandria

### Spiritual Adoption

MONTH 2 – Developing Baby  
– "I'm dancing!"

Your baby is making progress developing all of her external features and internal organs. Her brain is functioning at 40 days. Her mother can hear her heartbeat now on an ultrasonic stethoscope. Baby-teeth buds are present at 6 ½ weeks. The central nervous system is functioning and 40 muscle sets begin their first exercises. From this moment, your spiritually adopted baby grows and refines her body. But everything she needs to survive after birth is already present by the end of the eighth week. She is now called a "fetus" a Latin word meaning "little one". Ultrasound reveals that this little one can now spring, flip and jump – her first dance steps!



2. "Priests have received a power which God has given neither to angels nor to archangels. It was said to them: 'Whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose, shall be loosed.' Temporal rulers have indeed the power of binding; but they can only bind the body. Priests, in contrast, can bind with a bond which pertains to the soul itself and transcends the very heavens. Did [God] not give them all the powers of heaven?...What greater power is there than this? The Father has given all judgment to the Son. And now I see the Son placing all this power in the hands of men. They are raised to this dignity as if they were already gathered up to heaven" -St. John Chrysostom

3. "The nation doesn't simply need what we have. It needs what we are." - -St. Teresia Benedicta (Edith Stein)

## Special Lenten Holy Hour

I am also excited to announce that we will be having a special Holy Hour each Sunday of Lent at Epiphany from 6PM-7PM. These Holy Hours will carry with them a special reflection on the Seven Last Words of Christ. Please see the schedule below.

<u>Sunday</u>	<u>Words of Christ</u>	<u>Meditation</u>
March 5th	Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do. – Luke 23:34	Fr. Michael Rennie
March 12th	Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise. – Luke 23:43	Fr. Bill Kempf
March 19th	Woman, behold your son, Son behold your mother. - John 19:26-27	Msgr. Gregory Mikesch
March 26th	My God, My God, why have you forsaken me? – Matthew 27:46	Fr. Ralph Houlihan S. J.
April 2nd	I thirst -John 19:28	Fr. Tom Miller
April 9th	It is finished. - John 19:30 Father into your hands I commit my spirit -Luke 23:46	Msgr. John Borcic